

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, December 17, 1992

Published Since 1877

In former Yugoslavia —

Baptists feeding refugees, but locals are the heroes

BELGRADE, Serbia (BP) — Southern Baptists in America are helping feed thousands of refugees who have fled the bitter civil war in former Yugoslavia.

But the real heroes are local Baptists who distribute food from outside donors through programs run on nickels, dimes, hard work, and faith.

A previously announced \$225,000 gift from the Foreign Mission Board will provide food to more than 30,000 people over the next two to three months.

Many of them are Bosnian families who have left their homeland with little more than their lives. Southern Baptist missionary Bill Steele is helping coordinate use of the funds.

Baptists work on all sides of the conflict, helping Croatians, Serbians and Bosnians alike:

— In Puscine, northern Croatia, Baptist layman Bratko Horvat has turned the warehouse of his electronics firm into a clearinghouse for refugee ministry. The modern facility normally filled

with fax machines and copiers, now bulges with food, clothing, shoes, and other items. Horvat sends his own trucks around the city where 10,000 Bosnian refugees have settled. At times he even sends trucks into Bosnian territory to distribute aid.

Horvat personally has preached at the front lines. He distributes food and clothing to Muslim refugees with no strings attached, but uses every opportunity to spread his faith.

"Jesus is not American, not

Croatian and not Serbian," he tells the refugees, whom he prefers to call "guests."

"When you talk the people cry, but when our man talks nobody cries. What power do you have?" one Muslim man asked Horvat.

— At Sisak, Croatia, near the Serbian war front, Baptist worker Zelko Mraz flips through receipts for the food Getsemane Mission has bought with Foreign Mission Board funds: 2,400 cans of stew, 500 kilograms of noodles, 500 liters of cooking oil, 500 pounds of rice, 1,500 kilograms of sugar.

Each 21 days workers with the Baptist-led organization distribute food parcels to about 400 families the government has committed to their care. With few of their own resources, they depend on outside aid to help meet the pressing needs around them.

— In Zagreb, Croatia's capital city, the Baptist group "My Neighbor," is using a \$25,000 gift from Southern Baptists to feed about 2,000 people for two months. The ministry, based in Zagreb Baptist Church, operates a clothing warehouse and an extensive food distribution ministry across Croatia. "My Neighbor," probably the biggest of the Baptist-related refugee ministries, has established a newsletter to report on its work.

— Darvar Baptist Church in the United Nations-protected town of the same name also depends on outside help, said pastor Misko Horvatek. With just 74 members, the church has taken on the mammoth responsibility of caring for 400 refugee families in the town of Krapina. To heighten the challenge, the church lost its entire savings account of prewar Yugoslavian currency at the bank.

Church members even pay rent for some refugee families to assure them of housing. But they will use the \$20,000 given to the church by the Foreign Mission Board only for food, in keeping with careful agreements. Horvatek recently bought five tons of protein-enriched food supplement to mix with regular flour to make it more nutritious. Members also distribute New Testaments to many of the families they help.

— At Osijek, Croatia, a major bridge near the town center lies shattered in a river that separates the town from Serbian-held territory. The city is quiet now, but

many buildings are pockmarked by automatic weapons fire from previous fighting.

Toma Magda, pastor of the 50-member Baptist church here, said the congregation supports 100 refugee families with food. Some are Croatian, some Serbian and others are Bosnian, reflecting the hurt the war has dished out to all sides.

Church members don't ask about religious backgrounds of refugees; it's too touchy a question these days in a land where your religious background can get you killed.

The church has helped 400 refugee school children get nourishing lunches by providing food for the school staff to prepare. Members plan to expand the program to a second school, Magda said. The church also has distributed several tons of clothing provided by Brethren churches in Germany and detergent for washing baby diapers provided by others.

— Slovenia is the newly independent country that used to be northern Yugoslavia, with a population of about 2 million. Just five small Baptist congregations worship here — part of the 500 or so evangelicals in the predominantly Catholic country. But they, too, minister to the many refugees who have fled here. About 20,000 refugees live in 65 camps while another 60,000 stay with relatives across Slovenia.

As the war drags on into the winter, hardships will increase for many refugees as weather makes already poor roads impassable. With no end in sight to the fighting, Baptists will minister for months to come.

One positive result of the war: Baptists have become widely recognized as people who give substance to their faith through service. "In the past the government persecuted Baptists. But Baptists have helped in humanitarian aid and this has helped to establish an identity," said Osijek pastor Toma Magda.

"We must move now. Now's the time to serve and evangelize and reach out," declared Branko Lovrec, leader of the Croatian Baptist Union in Zagreb. "Now, now, now."

Creswell, an Europe correspondent, recently returned from a second visit to several parts of embattled former Yugoslavia.



Local Baptists are the real heroes

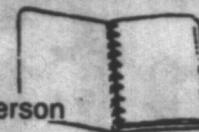
The real heroes of the civil war in dying Yugoslavia include Christians like layman Bratko Horvat (left), who pauses to examine relief supplies with Southern Baptist missionary Bill Steele (right), and Canadian Baptist mission official John Keith. Horvat turned the warehouse of his electronics firm in Croatia into a clearinghouse for refugee ministry. The modern facility, normally filled with fax machines and copiers,

bulges with food, clothing, shoes and other items. Horvat sends his own trucks to distribute aid around the city, where 10,000 Bosnian refugees have settled, and even into dangerous Bosnian territory. He has personally preached at the front lines. "Jesus is not American, not Croatian, and not Serbian," he tells the refugees, whom he prefers to call "guests." (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Thursday, December 17, 1992

Guy Henderson



The world back then

In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son. What was the world like when he came? Was it as peaceful as a Christmas card or as stormy in the political and economic arena as a Pacific typhoon?

We know that Caesar Augustus (Octavian) was the emperor of Rome, and the crafty Herod was strengthening his position in Judea by murder and intrigue. He killed many of his own family, including his favorite wife Mariamne. Her death affected him greatly and it was rumored he had lost his mind. A literal reign of terror stalked the land. Herod did rebuild the temple hoping to win over the Jews, but H.I. Hester in *The Heart of Hebrew History*, says it had little effect.

In the latter days of the cruel monarch, momentous events were taking place. Four hundred years of silence was about to be broken. Gabriel, a master of announcements, told a Galilean maiden of the coming Messiah — the real King of the Jews. While Herod groveled in his misery the child Jesus was lovingly placed in a manger. God had once again spoken to his people.

This was a new beginning, the dawning of a new era. From henceforth time would be designated B.C. and A.D. The centerpiece of human history walked among men. His influence on the world would be incalculable. Armies and navies, kings and parliaments, all combined, have not affected the life of

man as has that one solitary life. Has he lost his appeal to man? Has the modern world outgrown the Carpenter of Galilee?

It's true he does not have the place in the hearts of men he should have. Many reject him and his teachings. However, thousands, yea millions, would follow him to the death. Well over \$4 billion is given to his cause each year in the USA. The first book to be printed from movable type was the Bible and now 40 million Bibles a year are being sold. More pages are printed about Christ every week than about any hundred of the world's greatest men.

Back then it was the Graeco-Roman world. In the first century the Romans fostered political administrations but the Greeks molded intellectual life. Much of the New Testament reflects this influence.

The military influence is also evident. Roman roads and seaways championed commerce. There was a smattering of wealthy people and millions of extremely poor people. Slavery was an institution then and a wealthy man needed 200 or more slaves to retain his status. Morals were unspeakably evil and openly displayed. Suicide and infanticide were common. Religion filled the empire but darkness covered the land.

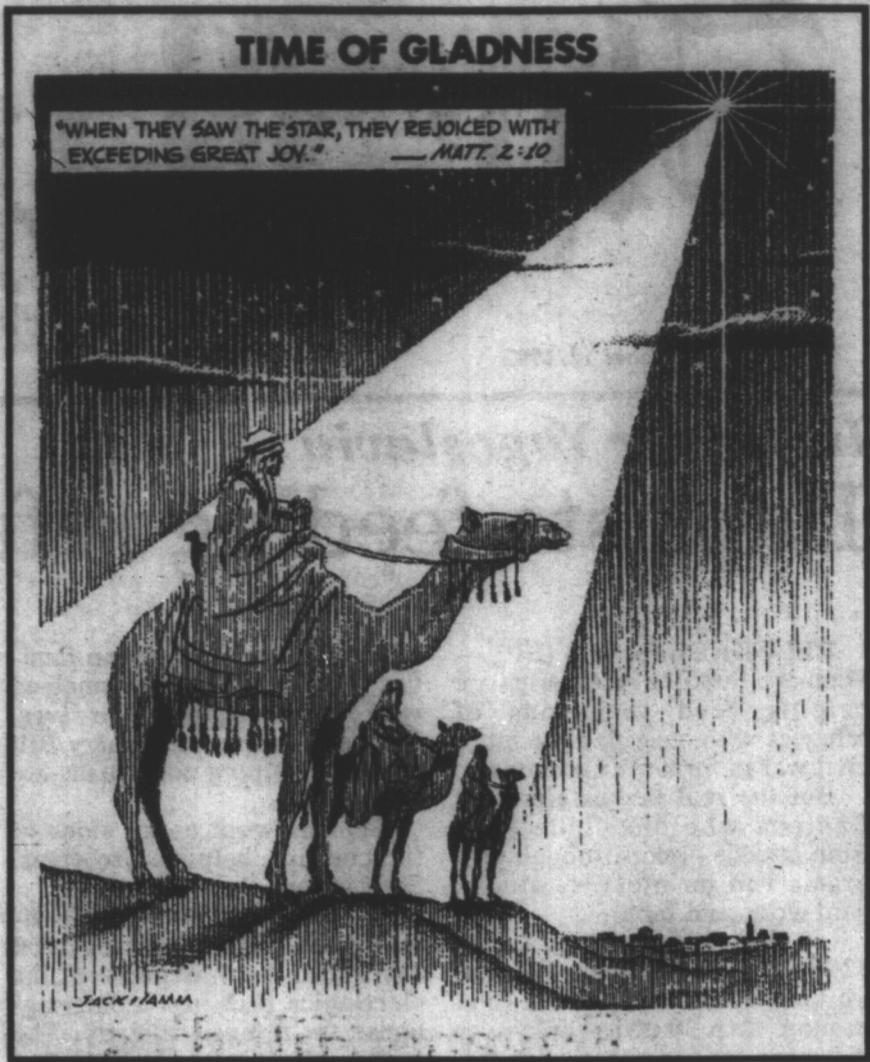
It was in such a world that the angel said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." "Fear not" was the angel's

word to Zacharias: "Thou shalt have joy, and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth." In light of their world, how could they speak of joy and gladness? Assuredly, nothing externally justified such a pronouncement. Fear not, when their world was crumbling!

Is there a "fear not" left for us today? We have war on practically every continent. Starvation, famine, and disease have become commonplace; we watch a war on our televisions. Crime makes us fearful, political intrigue is the order of the day, and the fabric of the family is rent by abortions, AIDS, and gross immorality. Have all the "fear nots" been spent in the marketplace and we await bankruptcy?

The same source of the first century's "fear not" is the source for today. The external situation will leave us confused and weak, but the joy and gladness is there for all who accept the gift God has for us.

Man's heart has not been altered since the first century. Greed, selfishness, and sin are still with us. There is little consolation in looking at Rome in A.D. 92 or 1992 — nor in any other city. The real joy and gladness are found in a simple statement Jesus made: First, God so loved the world. It moved him to give his only Son, and God has a special gift for all who would trust him. Joy to the world. The Lord has come. This erases the "fear" of that day and of your day.

TIME OF GLADNESS
"WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR, THEY REJOICED WITH EXCEEDING GREAT JOY." — MATT. 2:10

A Blessed and Happy Christmas from the Baptist Record staff —

Betty Anne Bailey, Florence Larrimore, Wm H. Perkins Jr., Teresa Dickens, Renee Waller, Betty Smith, Shannon Simpson, Guy Henderson

Guest opinion...

Baptists offer alternatives for celebrating Christmas

By Mike McManus

Recently, I received a letter signed by national religious leaders which struck my eye: "Campaign to Take Commercialism Out of Christmas."

It started well, how they are "deeply concerned about the excessive commercialization of Christmas. For far too long we have witnessed the spiritual yield to the commercial. We have seen the spirit of Christmas reduced to a carnival of mass marketing. Consumption has taken on an almost religious quality; malls have become the new shrines of worship."

But the statement's proposed alternatives were thin: "We call on people of faith to speak out against the over-commercialization of Christmas in our media and malls."

"Let us invest in renewing our own spirits, our relationships, and our natural environment." Too

vague for me! I prefer the specifics suggested by Rusty Gilbert, pastor of Rocky Springs Baptist Church in Lisbon, La.:

"Every Christmas morning I go out and visit shut-ins, the home-bound and anyone who has had a significant loss in their family in the past year. I take my family with me and we spend time with these people," he told Chip Alford of the Baptist Press.

"We've prayed with them and we've cried with them. I think it is important for families to touch the life of somebody that you don't have to touch (during the holidays)."

Gayle Haywood, minister of preschool and children at Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church and mother of three, sets aside one evening for Christmas decorating — not just the tree. The centerpiece is a nativity scene, "low

enough so the girls can play with it. And as we unwrap the pieces of the nativity scene we talk about each character.... I think it is important for it to be a hands-on thing... to help them learn about the Christmas story."

My wife, Harriet, was very creative with our boys when they were young. Each year they handmade Christmas presents for grandparents, cousins, and especially for older friends of the family now living alone. Often they were decorations that could be hung on a tree — a stained glass cross or star. One year it was a placemat with bright fall leaves. Many of these have survived and hang on our Christmas tree years later.

For a parent, the central question of Christmas is this: How does one build a family on the rock of a belief in Jesus Christ? In this secu-

lar culture, that is an intense challenge. Fortunately, a Southern Baptist named Wes Allen has come up with a solid and immensely practical answer — one any family can afford and use.

He has created a biblical placemat called "Daily Guidelines to Strong and Happy Christian Families." Allen has selected hundreds of verses that pithily state things to do that build solid marriages and families, and things not to do that are harmful. There are guidelines for 31 days.

A mother or father could read #10 if it is the 10th of the month, for example, which says: "Parents, instead of leading the family with dominance, abuse, or force, lead them with inspiration and example." It then gives three biblical references. One month a father might read 1 Peter 5:2-3, which is about the role of a parent as a

shepherd, "eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples."

Dad might ask the kids, "Do you think we have been good examples?" A parent who is that vulnerable will be listened to when correcting a child.

Another month on the 10th, he might look up Colossians 3:19 and read, "Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them." He could then ask his wife, "Do you think I have been harsh with you?" If so, apologize!

Daily use of the "Daily Guidelines" will indeed build "strong and happy families." The truths of Scripture are eternal. What a Christmas present — to give your family an easy way to study God's plan for them.

McManus is a free-lance ethics and religion columnist, living in Bethesda, Md.

The Baptist Record

VOLUME 116 (ISSN-0005-5778) NUMBER 44
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$7.35 a year payable in advance. Second class postage paid at Jackson, Mississippi. The Baptist Record is a member of Southern Baptist Press Association.

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Baptist Record Advisory Committee: Deborah Brunt, Corinth; Susan Kinton, Walnut Grove; Randy Turner, Laurel; Jackson; Horace Kerr, Brandon; Grady Collins, Philadelphia; Warren Collins, Taylorsville; Teresa Dickens, secretary.
Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.
Send news, communications, and address changes to The Editor, Baptist Record P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205
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Annuity Board will lower Fixed Fund target range

By Thomas E. Miller Jr.

DALLAS (BP) — The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention announced a 1993 earnings target range of 5.75% to 6.75% for its Fixed Fund, one of four investment funds offered to members.

A year ago the Annuity Board announced a long-term restructuring of the Fixed Fund designed to continue its safety, enhance its competitiveness and provide increased diversification.

"While this restructuring is continuing on schedule," John R. Jones, senior vice president for investments said, "the main reason for a lower target range is the dramatic drop in interest rates over the last several years. With three-year jumbo CDs at 4.25% and five-year CDs at 5.25%, no one could expect other conservative investments to continue the performance of the '80s."

The restructuring of the Fixed Fund, which began in 1991, will gradually replace insurance companies' guaranteed investment

contracts with short-term maturity investments over six years. "Since the market value of the new securities changes with the general level of interest rates, account balances and the return credited to the Fixed Fund will vary some over time," Jones said.

The Fixed Fund target range is not guaranteed but the board believes there is a high probability of performance within the range.

"The crediting rate each month will be the actual performance of the fund, and there will be fluctuations on a month-by-month experience," Jones said. In 1992 the Fixed Fund has earned near the upper end of the 7.5% to 8.5% target range.

Members can change the fund or funds to which contributions are made by notation on their monthly billings or by calling the Annuity Board's toll-free number, 1-800-262-0511.

Miller is senior vice president for public relations, Annuity Board.

FMB's Eugene Hill dies after wreck at age 83

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Eugene L. Hill, 83, who helped start Chinese Baptist churches in Virginia and Maryland after retiring from a 40-year career with the Foreign Mission Board, died Dec. 11 of injuries from a car-truck crash in the Richmond area. The Hills' car skidded into the rear of a dump truck Dec. 10 during a rain-storm. Mrs. Hill, a passenger in the car, received less serious injuries and was released from the hospital after an overnight stay.

Hill retired from the Foreign Mission Board staff in 1975 as

head of the department of missionary education. He worked 20 years on the staff after serving 20 years as a missionary. He and his wife were missionaries to China 16 years and then worked four years in what was then known as the Singapore-Malaya mission.

A memorial service was held Dec. 14 in Richmond, with burial planned in McAlester, Okla., where their son, Eugene Benton, is buried. Besides his wife and son, Hill is survived by four brothers, three grandsons and four great-grandsons.

13 Southern Baptist chaplains among U.S. troops in Somalia

By Sarah Zimmerman

ATLANTA (BP) — At least 13 Southern Baptist military chaplains are among those assigned to relief efforts in Somalia, said Lew Burnett, director of military chaplaincy for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

While the chaplains' primary ministry is to soldiers, the focus on humanitarian aid rather than warfare will change the nature of the chaplains' task, Burnett said.

Instead of the fear of being killed, many military personnel assigned to Somalia are excited about their mission, said Lew Dawson, HMB associate director of military chaplaincy.

Yet seeing people die from starva-

tion may be more traumatic for some soldiers than seeing people die in warfare, Dawson said.

In addition to working with troops on the field, chaplains will minister to soldiers returning to the United States with haunting memories of the situation in Somalia, Dawson said. Some soldiers will also need help readjusting to the United States where food is plentiful.

Southern Baptist chaplains are endorsed by the Southern Baptist chaplaincy commission but are enlisted and assigned like other military personnel.

Zimmerman writes for HMB.

No Baptist Record Dec. 24

There will be no Baptist Record issue on Dec. 24, 1992. Postal regulations mandate that we publish only 50 times per year. Therefore, no issues are published during the weeks of July 4 and Dec. 25. Readers may expect their next edition on Dec. 31. Merry Christmas!

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Published Since 1877

FMB continues to move toward leadership change

By Robert O'Brien

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Foreign Mission Board trustees continued moving toward a change of leadership, heard reports from the board's interim president and search committee chairman, and agreed to employ a consulting firm to study the board's structure.

In a quiet Dec. 7-9 meeting, trustees also heard reports on missions opportunities ranging from Somalia to the former Soviet Union, appointed 35 new foreign missionaries and heard a guest evangelist from North Carolina urge them to "plow on" in their task of world missions.

Evangelist Paul Tsika, apparently referring to the controversy that has beset the Southern Baptist Convention and the Foreign Mission Board, urged trustees to focus on the board's evangelistic goals.

"Forget what is behind and pay attention to the goal in the future," he said. "I'm an avowed fundamentalist, but I don't go for the issue but for the propagation of the gospel. The church is battling without discernment. We should focus on fighting to establish the gospel."

Don Kammerdiener, addressing his first trustee meeting as interim president, presented an "interim agenda" as the board seeks a new president to replace R. Keith Parks. Trustees concluded Kammerdiener's report with standing applause.

Parks, who retired Oct. 31 because of disagreements with the board's direction, sat quietly in the

audience as Kammerdiener spoke and the board conducted its business Dec. 9. He also attended the board's Dec. 8 missionary appointment service. Parks, who will become missions coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Feb. 1, told Baptist Press he attended because "I'm a Southern Baptist interested in world missions."

He committed himself: 1) to affirm missionaries, staff, and trustees in public and in private and urged them to work as a team; 2) to assume trustee votes on principles and policies represent true feelings, not a "hidden agenda," and that staff should act according to them; and 3) to make the board a more "user-friendly" agency, especially with large churches that have not related closely to the board in the past.

Kammerdiener challenged each trustee to "become a denominational missions leader" who will support the board and its work through communications, action, prayer, and financial support.

On communications, Kammerdiener said the board is committed to telling the truth. "As a board we have nothing to fear from the truth. It's better for Baptists and others to understand the truth, even if it's not a pleasant truth, than it is to be ignorant.... Our credibility... depends on our ability and willingness to tell the truth."

Trustees dealt with a variety of other matters:

The board action to hire a con-

sulting firm began the process of studying the board's organization related to its purpose.

Trustee Lawson Swearingen of Louisiana, speaking to the recommendation, said the action was "not intended to criticize anything" (about the board's present organization) but to help the board determine "where we are, where we want to go, and how to get there."

Board chairman John Jackson of California said he, three other trustees and four staff members will attend the meeting of the Woman's Missionary Union executive board in Birmingham Jan. 9 and at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talledega, Ala., Jan. 10-13. A 17-member committee studying how the women's auxiliary will relate to all Southern Baptists, including the new Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, will bring recommendations at the meeting.

In an unrelated action, a strategy subcommittee of trustees and staff studying the use of volunteers agreed that the board's overall objective is positioning career missionaries to start churches. Acknowledging the positive contribution volunteers make, a spokesman for the group said nonetheless that members "are in total agreement we're not moving toward becoming a volunteer organization that in any way eclipses anything we've done in the past."

O'Brien is managing editor of News and Information office for FMB.

Positive financial report, staff additions mark HMB meeting

ATLANTA (BP) — The Home Mission Board's executive committee received a positive financial report during its final meeting of the year.

"Thank the Lord for Southern Baptist faithfulness," said board chairman Ron Phillips, a Chattanooga, Tenn., pastor, following the Dec. 8 report.

Bob Banks, HMB executive vice president, attributed the positive financial report to the strength of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions which was 5% above projections after the first week of December, favorable returns on investments, and a one-time return from the sale of several investments.

The executive committee also

filled five vacant staff positions.

Elected to serve as director of marketing was John Head, presently director of development for the athletic program at Georgia State University in Atlanta. David Porter of Little Rock, Ark., was elected as associate director of marketing.

Timothy Norton, currently associate director of marketing, was elected associate director of church growth and associational evangelism.

Phillip Jones, currently director of the HMB's planning and services research department, was promoted to director of the research division. Reba Driver was promoted from associate director of loan administration for the board's church loans division to

director of loan administration.

The executive committee also approved appointment of 27 missions personnel and \$1.2 million in church loans for 24 churches, including sites for three new churches. The committee endorsed 57 new chaplains, bringing the Southern Baptist chaplaincy total to more than 2,300.

HMB President Larry Lewis updated executive committee members on several items including development of construction plans for the agency's new headquarters building which is on schedule. Lewis also called Southern Baptists to prayer for relief efforts in Somalia, particularly for U.S. military personnel and Southern Baptist chaplains serving there.



State Baptists receive honor

Governor Kirk Fordice honored the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief ministry and several other helping organizations recently with commendations. He said of the Mississippi Baptist group that by the time he got to Rankin County following a tornado touchdown there, "the Mississippi Baptist Convention was already set up" and serving meals. Pictured with the Governor are Jim Didlake and Paul Harrell. Didlake is on site coordinator of the disaster relief work; Harrell is off site coordinator and director of the state's Brotherhood Department. Didlake is consultant in that department. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)

Student ministry's name, affiliation change during reorganization of BSSB

NASHVILLE (BP) — The name and divisional affiliation of the student ministry organization at the Baptist Sunday School Board may have changed, but the agency's commitment to student work remains firm, state student directors were told at their annual planning meeting Dec. 1-4 in Nashville.

As part of the current reorganization of the Sunday School Board, the name of the student ministry department was changed to National Student Ministry and it was placed as a section under the new discipleship and family development division.

Several state student directors present at the meeting expressed concern about the new divisional affiliation and section status for the student ministry program.

"I don't feel comfortable being placed in a position that only addresses part of our work. Discipleship is only one part of (what

we do)," Jerry Merriman, director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Student Work Department, said.

John Tadlock, director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia's campus ministry division, said the problem state student directors face "is the perception that student ministry has been devalued" by the reorganization.

Several BSSB leaders assured the directors that is not the case, including Gene Mims, vice-president for church growth and programs; Roy Edgemon, director of the discipleship and family development division; and National Student Ministry Director Charlie Johnson.

"In no sense do we feel a diminishing of (student ministry) work.... I see it enlarging," Edgemon said, adding his division will promote student ministry products and services at all of its events and special meetings.

1992: Record number of students involved in summer missions

NASHVILLE (BP) — A record number of Southern Baptist college students were involved in semester and summer missions in 1992, and requests for student help in 1993 are expected to be even higher, according to reports given Dec. 2 at the state student directors meeting in Nashville.

Helen Wood, associate director of the Foreign Mission Board's international service department, said 246 students served as semester and summer missionaries in 30 foreign countries in 1992 — the highest number in the agency's history. That number does not

include 80 students who participated in short-term projects in Russia.

Wood also reported 347 requests for student summer missionaries in 1993 have been received from the foreign mission field, including large requests for help from the Philippines, Australia, and Kazakhstan. To date, only 77 of the requests have been filled, she said.

"We've really had a bumper crop of requests this year. I'm really hopeful that we will have a lot of students over the course of the next three months that will feel called into summer missions."

Opposition mounts against plan to lift military homosexual ban

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP) — President-elect Bill Clinton's stated intention to lift the ban on homosexuals in the United States armed services faces mounting resistance from congressional members as well as military, Christian, and conservative organizations.

Recent events signaling an organized effort to prevent a change in the Department of Defense policy are:

- a hearing before a House of Representatives Republican leadership committee in which witnesses from the military, Congress, and pro-family groups warned of the impact of inclusion of homosexuals in the armed forces.

- the formation of a coalition of military, religious, and pro-family organizations to oppose lifting the ban. The Coalition to Maintain Military Readiness is composed of more than 40 groups, including the Christian Life Commission.

- a nationwide "Just Say No to Homosexuals in the Military" campaign promoted by Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry and the Christian Defense Coalition. The sponsors are expecting public gatherings in about 100 cities Jan. 8 to protest Clinton's plan.

The ban exists, a Department of Defense spokesman testified at the hearing, for practical reasons, not because of security, social, moral, or philosophical considerations.

Unlike civilians, members of the armed services "cannot separate their professional and personal lives," said Christopher Jahn, assistant secretary in the Department of Defense for force management and personnel. Members of the military have sacrificed their right to privacy, Jahn said, and therefore "endure long periods of forced intimacy with their colleagues."

Senior military leaders consistently have determined the inclusion of

persons practicing homosexual behavior is "prejudicial to good order and discipline," Jahn said.

There is "no military benefit" in lifting the ban, said Ronald Ray, who served 32 years in the Marine Corps and recently was on President Bush's commission on women in combat.

The military's purpose is "not to serve as a laboratory for social engineering," Jackson said. "It is not a right, as some proponents of lifting the current ban contend. If it were a right, then the military

would not decline to accept the services of those who fail to qualify physically or mentally or those with criminal records or those with histories of illegal drug abuse."

"The lifting of this ban is a militant ideological push to forego everything else and force acceptance by the larger society," said Nancy Schaefer, president of Family Concerns Inc., a pro-family organization based in Atlanta.

Strode is director of media & news information, Washington office, CLC.

Somalia intervention may free flow of Baptist aid

MOGADISHU, Somalia (BP) — If successful, the U.S.-led military intervention in Somalia will help Southern Baptists spend a lot of money.

If the Marines free food distribution and rehabilitation programs in Somalia from disruption by armed gangs, the \$1.4 million in relief aid sent by the Foreign Mission Board will get spent as fast as prudently possible, board officials say.

The Foreign Mission Board has appropriated \$1.25 million for hunger relief and \$95,000 for resettlement work to get rural Somali people who've fled to the capital of Mogadishu back to their home areas and self-supporting once again. Another \$115,000 has been allocated for aiding Somali refugees in

neighboring Kenya and Yemen.

Relief agencies separate from the mission board are administering the aid in Somalia because of staunch resistance to allowing Christian evangelical groups to function in the Muslim country. Southern Baptist aid workers have operated for short terms in Somalia in recent months, however, including two who are there now.

Ten Southern Baptist aid workers have worked inside and outside Somalia delivering relief supplies, reported John Faulkner at the Foreign Mission Board's Dec. 9 trustee meeting in Richmond, Va. Faulkner, who lives in Nairobi, Kenya, is the area director for the board's mission work in eastern and southern Africa.

Sylvarena tornado damage

The Nov. 27 tornado which struck the Sylvarena Church in Smith Association left the sanctuary completely destroyed, and only a shell of an education building still standing. The gymnasium looked like "a wadded up piece of paper," according to Alan Balliet, pastor. The pastor's home and most of its furnishings were also destroyed. Though most of the structures were covered by insurance, their furnishings were a complete loss.

Court refuses abortion cases, leaves Casey decision in control

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Supreme Court's recent refusal to hear two abortion cases signaled inaction rather than reinforcement of its crucial decision in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* earlier this year, a Southern Baptist lawyer said.

The court announced Dec. 7 it would not hear an appeal of a lower court decision upholding a Mississippi law requiring a 24-hour waiting period and informed consent for women seeking abortions.

A week before, the court had announced in a 6-3 vote it would not accept the appeal of a ruling striking down a Guam statute prohibiting most abortions. Four votes are required for the court to hear a case.

"The legal effect of a refusal to hear an appeal is much different from an affirmation of the lower court," said Michael Whitehead, the Christian Life Commission's general counsel. "These cases do not amount to legal precedent upholding the decisions of the lower courts. A denial of the appeal is merely a decision to take no further action on the case."

"Casey is left as the controlling precedent. The court is likely to continue to avoid the abortion controversy for a while, letting Casey percolate through the lower courts and legislatures."

The court's June opinion in *Casey* upheld restrictions adopted by Pennsylvania, which included parental consent for minors, informed consent and a 24-hour

waiting period, but it reaffirmed as law the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision declaring abortion a woman's right.

The Mississippi law is nearly identical to the Pennsylvania statute's sections on a waiting period and informed consent. The Mississippi Informed Consent to Abortion Act requires a woman to receive from a physician or physician's agent information on the medical risks of abortion, risks of childbirth, gestational age of the unborn child, and services available if she chooses not to abort. The requirements are waived if the physician determines a medical emergency exists.

Strode is director of media & news information, Washington office, CLC.



Letters to the editor

Defends Ward

Editor:

As I read the latest copy of the Baptist Record I ran across a letter that was sent in by a reader questioning the teachings and theology of Wayne Ward. I know Ward. I studied under him on three different occasions. I have laughed with him, cried with him, and prayed with him.

Wayne Ward is without question one of the most loved and honored professors within the Southern Baptist Convention. There is no one who is more sincere and loving than Ward. You might be interested to know that, just hours before Ward spoke at the convention, he also addressed a group of alumni at the Southern Seminary luncheon. Ward spoke graciously about the changes within the denomination and particularly the ones at Southern Seminary. He said, "Some of us needed to come back into the fold because we had drifted too far." That statement reflects the type of cooperation and integrity that has been missing in our denomination for a long time. By the way, after studying under Ward, I found him to be as mainstreamed as any Southern Baptist I know.

In the future please refrain from casting judgement on professors that you have never studied under, and seminars you have never attended. This is precisely the type of careless slander that has caused the current division within our denomination.

Bill Hurt, pastor
First Church
Canton

Elder responds

Editor:

My views in this letter are intended to respond to recent events and published reports about Keith Parks, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and our Lottie Moon Mission Offering. Hopefully, we can all pull ourselves together on the basis of biblical teachings, Baptist heritage, and the Great Commission.

First, as a Southern Baptist, I have an undiminished loyalty to all our great missionaries on the field, and would appeal that through them we all "declare hope" by our prayers and generous gifts to the Lottie Moon Offering. This is our holy obligation in this "Holy Season."

Second, how very grateful I am to the Lord for the integrity, effectiveness, and dedication of Keith Parks in his 39 years of missionary service, including 13 years as our Foreign Mission Board president; my confidence in this brother has only deepened in the recent months.

Third, the FMB trustees had the authority and opportunity to affirm Parks' continued service as president, and, failing to do so they are now accountable to Southern Baptists for any uncertain condition and direction of our foreign mission work.

Fourth, consequently, Parks has both the freedom and responsibility to pursue his life-long calling as a missionary under the lordship of Christ alone and just as would any other Southern Baptist, with our hand of fellowship and "God-speed."

Fifth, Southern Baptist men, women, and churches have the right and freedom to organize into a missionary effort such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and support it with their contributions and time. Such supporters have been and are now grassroots, mainstream, Southern Baptist missionary supporters expressing their own "greatest integrity."

Sixth, what the denomination needs now is not more divisive rhetoric, but leaders who accept that we are all free, Bible-believing Baptists under the lordship of Christ alone. We need to earn each other's trust by servant leadership, and reach our arms around the whole family. That's integrity at its best!

Lloyd Elder
Former president
BSSB

Needs volunteers

Editor:

I am a Southern Baptist missionary with the FMB, serving in Honduras, Central America. I believe that evangelism is the heart of missions and have a desire to win souls and to start missions and churches. If you are a pastor, preacher, or evangelist of like mind, I need your help!

The need is for preachers to come to Honduras for preaching crusades and to live in communities with interpreters and "bond" with the people as you teach, witness, and preach for an entire week.

If you are interested in participating in such a crusade, please write to me. We have a crusade scheduled for Dec. 6-12, 1993, and others are in the making. It is urgent that I learn of your interest as soon as possible as there is a good deal of planning involved.

David Shofner
Apartado 373
San Pedro Sula
Honduras, C. A.

Commends Fordice

Editor:

The Cold Springs Church in Collins has sent a message to Governor Kirk Fordice. It read:

"Thank you for your willingness to speak your convictions before the Governors' Conference in Wisconsin last week. In this day of 'political correctness,' not many dare to prick the conscience of the public.

"It seems that Christianity is the only religion which can safely be sneered at and ridiculed with impunity.

"We agree with you that the downward spiral of the United States of America is definitely

connected to her refusal to recognize Jesus as the Savior of mankind.

"When we proclaim the name of the One who Isaiah so ably prophesied, we can expect condemnation from the world. But we can be comforted in the knowledge that our priorities are where they belong (Acts 5:29).

"We pray that you will always follow the convictions of your heart."

Cold Springs Church
Collins

Supports two offerings

Editor:

These are painful days for all Southern Baptists, regardless of their different perspectives. I have been a Southern Baptist pastor for 38 years, and I never dreamed I would be promoting a Christmas Offering for Missions in the church I serve; that it would be divided equally between the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Global Missions Offering of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. But that is what I am doing with a clear conscience.

For you see, we do in fact continue to support the thousands of missionaries that we helped to send at a time when many, who have now become the chief defenders of the Cooperative Pro-

gram and Lottie Moon, were giving little or nothing.

But we also support those missionaries who can no longer work for the Foreign Mission Board, and we support the work which the board has decided it can no longer support. We make our choice freely, with no judgment nor ill will toward those who choose to give all of their mission money through the SBC or the CBF.

Please, let us work together as best we can in conscience. And let's be done with talk about who needs to leave!

Dick Allison, pastor
University Church
Hattiesburg

God's Word absolute

Editor:

It was good to see someone in authority advise the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship what they should do. I refer to the article quoting SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman in an interview.

I have followed this group, and have seen how they have continually ridiculed the leaders of the SBC, who are staunch giants in the faith; who are remaining faithful to the true gospel, regardless of the cost. They have referred to them as "fundamentalists," among other

things. That's a compliment. The word denotes "root, foundation, basis of truth," etc. Thanks be unto God for men who held firm in these truths down through the ages, otherwise I might not have been able to hear the Truth and have new life in Christ.

My heart goes out to these people who have a problem believing part of God's Word. Sure, there may be errors in translation, but that does not change the meaning of it. God made it clear that his Word would stand forever. The Bible is a spiritual book, and can only be understood through the direction of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. There are no gray areas in Christianity, only absolutes. Either you believe, or you don't. We either "gather for him, or scatter abroad."

"They went out from us, because they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have no doubt continued with us." These people need to acknowledge that they can't have fellowship with someone with differing beliefs, strike out on their own, and if they are in God's will, he will provide their needs and they won't have to rely on the SBC for funding. That is part of God's covenant to his children.

Elizabeth Bollinger
Lambert

"Signature" ministry gives new life to Jackson church

By David Winfrey

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — Faced with urban flight in an inner-city neighborhood, Highland Church was in trouble.

"By all intents and purposes, we should have given up the ghost a long time ago," says Cliff Shipp, Highland pastor.

The neighborhood was in transition, crime eventually forced members to abandon Sunday night services and members who moved to the suburbs quit making the long drive back to church.

But Highland is one of several churches using unique ministries to defy their surroundings and grow or remain stable despite a shrinking population base.

Instead of closing its doors, the congregation aggressively started something not offered anywhere else: a ministry for mentally handicapped adults that included Sunday School, a music program, and career help.

"We realized we had to come up with something that gave us a reason to be," Shipp says.

Despite the changing environment, the new ministry offered the church a sense of identity and purpose, he says.

"It gave our people a sense of stability. Instead of seeing themselves as a declining church with everybody moving off, they had a sense

would with normal programs.

"They'll drive 30 miles to work. They'll drive nearly as far to a church that is doing something they're interested in," he says. Farley cites a number of unique ministries. Several churches, he says, cater to nearby resort and camping areas. A Nevada church with many members involved in the rodeo circuit has trained those people to lead Bible studies while on the road.

"There are all kinds of ministries they can do," he adds. "Part of it's going to be understanding what the needs are in your mile circle and the other part of it is understanding what kind of leadership God's gifted you with."

Winfrey writes for HMB.

Collins physician dies unexpectedly

Charles C. Tyler, 63, longtime medical doctor in Collins, died Friday evening at his home from heart failure. Tyler's wife Joan is president of Mississippi's Woman's Missionary Union.

Tyler was a graduate of Mississippi College and a deacon at Collins Church. Along with his wife, he is survived by two children and three granddaughters.

Tennessee church dedicates room to missionary Bill Wallace

By Connie J. Umstead

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A Knoxville, Tenn., church is extending the memory of famed Southern Baptist medical missionary William L. "Bill" Wallace who was killed in China in 1951.

Wallace Memorial Church, founded in 1953, was named in honor of Wallace. Thirty-nine years later, members and friends of the church met again to remember Wallace by dedicating The Bill Wallace Room, a room that serves as a museum/research center of information about his life and ministry.

Wallace, who was called to be a medical missionary at age 17, left for South China in September 1935, to answer his call at Stout Memorial

Baptist Hospital in Wuchow.

While there, he dealt with malnutrition, poverty, cholera epidemics, malaria, lack of running water, a faulty generator, and bombings by the Japanese. His areas of expertise included surgery, constructing artificial limbs, and repairing the faulty generator.

When the communists took control of Wuchow in 1949, Wallace hoped to coexist with them if he provided medical help to the community. However, communist officers eventually arrested Wallace as an American spy. They later claimed he hanged himself in his cell. Two Catholic priests who were later released said Wallace did not

commit suicide.

The Christian martyr's remains were returned to his home state in 1985. He is buried in Knoxville beside his parents.

The idea for The Bill Wallace Room was born seven years ago when Wallace Memorial Church Pastor James McCluskey realized very little was known about the doctor for whom Wallace Memorial Church was named. He also realized people from the generation who knew Wallace were still alive, but getting older.

He approached retired librarian Jane Powell, who was recently widowed, to gather and organize all the information she could about Wallace.

Powell said when she began she had no idea where to start, but the project mushroomed after she talked with Wallace's sister, Ruth Lynn Stegall, of Knoxville.

Although Wallace wrote letters to his sister, he did not give information about his work. Even when he was home on two furloughs, he preferred to visit his family and be updated on their activities, and continue his medical training.

However, Stegall saved every letter, card, article, and memento she received from and regarding her brother. She offered to let Powell copy each item. Powell set up the church copier on Stegall's dining room table, and worked for two days.

"We didn't know then what we were copying, but we realized that was the beginning," Powell said. After she finished and went through the material, she had the names of

Wallace's friends, many of whom she later interviewed.

Powell's research took her across the United States and to Wuchow, China. She spent two weeks at the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., during which time she talked with Eugene Hill, who was a missionary professor in Canton and close friend of Wallace. She later visited Lucy Wright Parker, a nurse for Wallace, in St. Petersburg, Fla., for ten days.

Powell also conducted an interview with Cornelia Leavell in Mississippi. Leavell was born in Wuchow, and her father, George Leavell, supervised the construction of Stout Memorial Baptist Hospital.

"One lead led to another, and one interview led to someone else," Powell said. She eventually interviewed Mary Lucille Saunders; Mildred Lovegren; Carter Morgan; and Eloise Cauthen, wife of Baker James Cauthen, all missionaries during Wallace's time.

Another interview occurred in Saulsbury, Md., with Everley Hayes, Wallace's surgical nurse and director of the school of nursing in Wuchow from 1947-1951. Although not imprisoned, Hayes was placed under house arrest after Wallace was killed. Also a missionary, Hayes later served in Indonesia, a plan she and Wallace had discussed when it appeared they would have to leave China.

The Bill Wallace Room, specially designed for Wallace Memorial Church's new facilities which were

completed last year, presents a picture of China during the time Wallace served before communist rule. The oriental design includes curio cabinets from Taiwan, Peking rugs, a Chinese screen, oriental benches, and an oriental game table and chairs.

Slides, video and cassette tapes, interview transcripts, articles, letters, memorabilia, and photographs are available; as well as books regarding Wallace, the history of the time period, and missionaries connected to Wallace.

Many of the Chinese items displayed were donated to the church by Hayes. Her collection includes a set of handcarved emperor's horses and decorative pieces of ivory and cloisonne. Other artifacts were donated by Leavell and Parker.

The Bill Wallace Room even has a hammer displayed. Wallace gave the hammer to his friend Frank Woodward after Woodward's hammer was stolen by the Japanese. Woodward felt it should be displayed in the room dedicated to Wallace.

McCluskey's foresight in gathering information about Wallace while people were alive who knew him was well-timed. Several people Powell interviewed have since either died or are now seriously ill. Those who have died include Parker and Woodward. Hayes now lives in a nursing home.

Umstead is news assistant for Tennessee BAPTIST AND REFLECTOR.

Jail time makes impression on 22 boys from local church

EUBANK, Ky. (BP) — After a sobering night behind prison bars, Royal Ambassadors from Bethel Church in Eubank, Ky., decided the new prison in Manchester, Ky., is a nice place to visit but they wouldn't want to live there.

Voluntarily trading in a free Friday evening for handcuffs, shackles and 8-by-15-foot cells, 22 RAs and 11 adults got a taste of prison life during an overnight visit to the newly-completed Federal Corrections Institute Nov. 13-14. Rocky Farmer, one of the RA leaders at Bethel Baptist and an employee at the prison, suggested the trip as a positive learning experience for his group. Pastor Jim McKinney quickly added his affirmation.

"Federal prisons don't open that often, and this was an opportunity for a once-in-a-lifetime learning

experience," McKinney said.

The prison held open house Nov. 13 for interested citizens in the community to tour the facility. But, McKinney said, Bethel's RAs were the only group to request permission to stay overnight in the prison cells.

Ricky Farmer, a 14-year-old who "has been in RAs ever since I can remember," said having the doors locked wasn't "too scary" for him. But he did admit he was relieved when they were opened again.

After a walking tour of the facilities Saturday morning, the group concluded its visit with a devotional thought about choices.

"We talked about the cost of wrong choices and focused on facing choices as responsible people," McKinney said.

Baptism total expected to decrease

SALT LAKE CITY (BP) — After four years of increases, baptisms in Southern Baptist churches are expected to be down 5% for the 1991-92 church year.

The report, based on information from state conventions, was presented during the winter meeting of state evangelism directors.

Clay Price, director of the Home Mission Board Program Research Department, estimated baptisms in 1992 will total 377,000, down from 396,668 in 1991. Though the estimate is less than the 1991 total, it is the third-highest total in the last nine years, Price said.

The convention reported its highest number of baptisms in 1972 with 445,725. The average number of annual baptisms from 1950 to 1991 is 383,036.



Jane Powell, left, librarian at Wallace Memorial Church in Knoxville, Tenn., stands with James McCluskey, pastor, in The Bill Wallace Room. The church was founded in 1953, and began plans for The Bill Wallace Room seven years ago. The memorial room was completed last year.

Devotional...

My Christmas Prayer

By Jean C. Geiger

My dear holy heavenly Father,

I would like the world to know what Christmas means to me. My Father, I have Christmas every day. It isn't a time or a season. It is the thrill of knowing you loved me before I was born, and Jesus came to give his life on the cross to keep me from tasting that death or having to be afraid of it (Rev. 1:14-15). The book of Daniel says his head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

Revelation 1 says his feet are like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. Ezekiel tells me those feet were burned for me.

Thank you, Jesus, for loving me this much. Your love is the greatest gift anyone could receive. From your gift comes peace, joy, and much happiness each day as my husband says, "Darling, I love you." This is Christmas.

Christmas is walking into church and hearing a young person say to me, "Mrs. Geiger, I haven't had my hug today." Christmas is visiting a young mother whose baby smiles at me or, as an older child, reaches for a hug from me or asks me to read him a story.

Christmas is a phone call that says, "I just called to say I love you and I am glad you are my friend." Christmas is a call from my granddaughter who

says, "Nanna, I love you."

Christmas is a beautiful card with a note from a young mother to tell me how she feels about a little help I gave her — that is a rose garden and the sweet smell of Christmas.

Christmas is a Sunday School class party; walking into church and seeing a family from another country, and making them my friends. Christmas is every Sunday, every sermon, every response of an open heart accepting your Son as Savior.

The parades, the music, the candy, the decorations, make it all so festive. But Christmas is every day in the love of friends and fellowship of Christians.

Thank you, Father, for your precious Son who makes our Christmas and all our wonderful daily blessings, all year long! The most precious is a friend who walks down the aisle of our church and says, "I have accepted Jesus as my Savior, and now I want to be baptized and live for him the rest of my life." That is Christmas!

Christmas is the love we share and our gifts to missions instead of buying expensive gifts we don't need in the first place. I do enjoy Christmas and every day of my life.

Geiger is a member of Calvary Church, Starkville.





Faces & Places

By Anne Washburn McWilliams



Thursday, December 17, 1992

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

Christmas Day in Jerusalem

Where was I? A blue and white ceramic flower set into the bed's headboard? Oh, yes. The National Palace Hotel in Jerusalem. If I were home, it would be time to get up and unwrap the gifts under the tree! For the first time in my life, I was away from my family on Christmas Day.

Not much hot water. No matter. Maybe a cold shower would wake me. From Room 105, my roommate, Ruth Richardson, and I walked down the white marble steps and past the Christmas tree in the lobby.

After breakfast, we paid a visit to the Garden Tomb. Around the open door of the empty tomb, grasses had sprouted from crevices in the stone wall. Behind us, geraniums blossomed despite the cold, in bright contrast to the green of pines and cypress. To our right and higher, loomed Golgotha. Earlier, inside the tomb, I had read the sign over the door: "He is not here; He is risen."

There in the garden we sat on benches, wet from a rain that had fallen in the night, and sang "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come." In that early morning service I felt awe and thanksgiving for our God who loved us enough to send us the Gift of His Only Son, and that that Son loved us enough to die for us up there on Skull Hill.

Through the Damascus Gate, Ruth and I walked, and then past

the marketplace in the Old City and down the Via Dolorosa. A boy emerged from a flock of begging children and said that for a certain coin he'd guide us to the Wailing Wall. He led us through an underground passage where Orthodox Jews in black hats stood beating their foreheads against the wall. Outside, under open sky, we

husband. In a shop next door to the hotel, I bought an olivewood manger scene for Mama, and a pearl necklace for my sister.

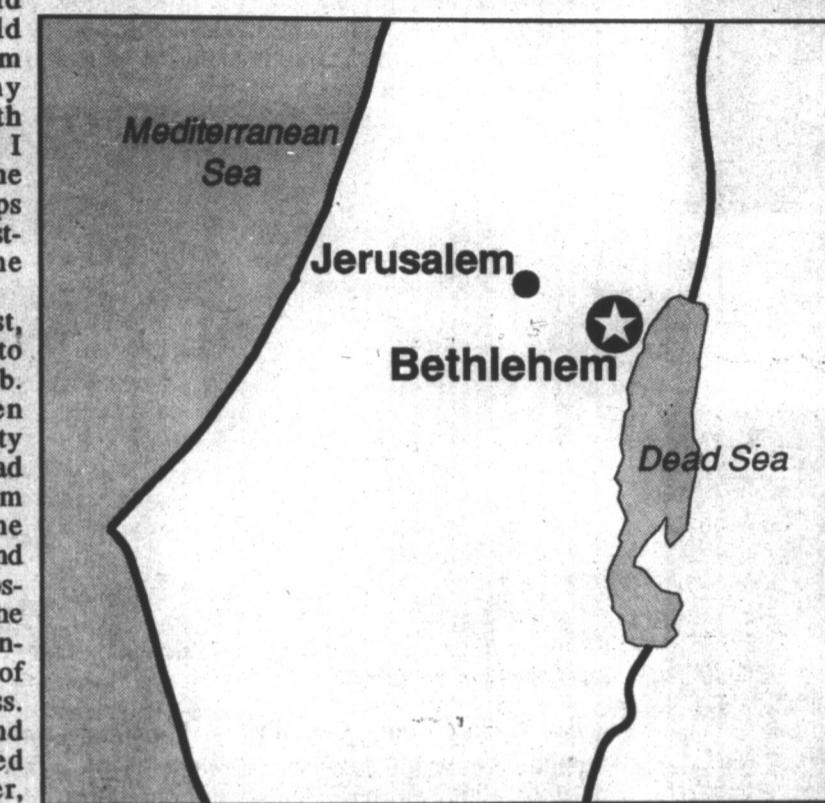
Since Ruth was my "substitute family" this holiday, I wanted to choose a gift for her. Yet I'd known her less than a week. How could I know what she liked or would want? In the hotel's gift shop she helped me to buy a necklace for myself. From various comments she made, I knew she had a knowledge of, and a liking for, gems — precious and semi-precious. When I absolutely could not decide which one I liked best, she picked up a necklace with a green stone — malachite, and said, "I like this one better than any in the store." I bought it for myself.

"What would she want?" I kept thinking. She was a university professor. "What would have spe-

cial meaning for her? What can I give her that would be a surprise, an unexpected gift?" For sure I knew she liked my necklace. No, I didn't give her that, but I bought another just like it.

For Christmas dinner the hotel served vegetable soup, pastry-encased turkey bits, potatoes, and spice cake. Finally, the tour group's "party in the parlor" was over, and back in our room, I gave Ruth her gift. She gave me a Bible with an olivewood cover, one she'd seen me fingering lovingly, but which I had not bought.

Christmas — be it in Jerusalem or in Jackson — is a time for giving gifts. It is a time to show others that we care for them, a time for loving others as God first loved us.



heard a woman wailing softly. She leaned against the wall, her head bowed. Still mourning the loss of their temple, still waiting for the coming of a Savior — had they not heard that today was Christmas Day? Did they not know that the Messiah had come 2,000 years ago? Did they not believe the Gift was meant for them, too?

Shopping at a late date is my style, but I'd never waited before until Christmas Day! Near Herod's Gate, I bought a fur hat for my



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Mississippi missionaries in Brazil

The annual meeting of the South Brazil Mission was held in Aguas de Sao Pedro, Sao Paulo, Brazil, in July. The event is a gathering of missionaries with Mississippi ties who serve in South Brazil. Those who attended were: Gordon and Dot Shambarger; John, Kathy, and Michelle Vaughn; Phil, Laura, and Summers Dunaway; Tony, Karen, Hannah, and Katy Gray; Ronnie Erwin; Barbara and Bill Moseley; Gene Wilson; Bob and Betty Gabriel; Roger and Penny Stacy; Tom and Bonnie Hearon; Bill and Carolyn Smith; and Dot Lott. Not pictured are Bob Erwin and Angie Wilson.

The Prayer Ministry:

If you hadn't prayed...

By Charles Whitten

I stood on the grounds of the Indiana Baptist Camp. It was following a message on salvation and life dedication that I had given the night before. GAs and Acteens were milling around during their free time. Suddenly I became aware of a nine-year-old GA, Kelli, who had slipped her arm around my waist and said softly, "If you hadn't come, I'd be lost."

That set me to thinking: If many people hadn't prayed, I wouldn't have been there to tell Kelli that God doesn't want her or anybody else in the world to be lost.

I thought of my mother, who prayed before I was born that I would do God's will. I thought of loving, supportive people in the Beulah Baptist Church in Choctaw County who thought they saw promise in me. I thought of Mississippi College and M.O. Patterson, my Bible professor. He said after hearing my testimony, "Young man, if you are sincere in what you say, God is calling you to preach."

I thought of the many churches I pastored in Mississippi and Kentucky. I thought of professors, Student Volunteer Band, and missionary speakers at Southern Seminary. I thought of Baptists all over our convention who sent my wife and me to the mission field with a promise to pray. All this made me know that I was passed "from heart to heart" in prayer.

Thank God for intercessory prayer, Kelli. Without it, I don't believe I'd even be here!

At this Christmas season, when God "laid himself on the doorstep of the world in the person of his Son, Jesus," let's make a list of prayer needs that we know about and pray for them daily.

If we don't pray, some will not go and some will keep on being lost.

The Whittens are volunteer Prayer Ministry coordinators, MBCB.

Erastus Hall, Baptist minister, dies at 86

Erastus S. Hall, 86, died Nov. 7 in New Albany. Services were held Nov. 10 at First Church, New Albany, where he was a member. He pastored churches in Union, Pontotoc, Panola, Winston, Wayne, and Attala counties.

His wife, the former Mary Martin, preceded him in death on March 28, 1990. He is survived by two sons, Larry Hall of Vicksburg and Robert Hall of Henderson, Texas; one sister, Lottie Virginia Evans, Ripley; and one brother, Marvin Hall, New Albany.

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Just for the Record



First Church, Batesville, recently held a recognition service for its GAs. Pictured, left to right, bottom row, are Ellie Wray, Christy Ann Standard, Sarah Beth Sullivan, Amanda Kelly Standard, Maci Martin, Meghan Wilson; second row, Betsy Benson, Laurie Anne Steele, Laura Sturgeon, Ava Drake, Erika Beth Thomas,

Ginnie Moore; third row, Allyson Wilson, Angie Wray (leader), Christy Odom, Joyce Shirley (leader), Elizabeth Benson, Claudene Standard (leader), Jennifer Shirey, Tabatha Terry, Patricia Benson (director), Abby Drake, Linda Drake (leader), and Suzie Johnson (leader).



Calvary Church, Waynesboro, recently held an Acteen/GA recognition service. Pictured, first row, left to right, are Lindsay Bonner, Caiti Moriarty, Jenci Bowen, Kendall Cooper, Penni Bowen, Andrea McIlwain, Amy Cooley, Katie Odom; second row, India Greene, Amanda Mowinski, Victoria McIlwain, Ashley

Douglas, Miranda Bennett, Rebekah Bennett, Jessica Campbell, Jalin Wood, Shandi Bonner, Cassandra Overstreet; third row, Katie Dickerson, Dana Corage, Bridgett Greene, Bre Mowinske, Misty West, Nicole McIlwain, and Emily Parnell. Not pictured is Lori Stanley. Doug Broome is pastor.

The combined youth and adult choirs of Bunker Hill Church, Columbia, will present "Noel, Jesus is Born" Dec 20 at 6 p.m. For more information, call the church at 736-1136 or Paul Powell, minister of music, at 731-1472.



Kolola Springs Church, Caledonia, held a Harvest Day and note burning ceremony Nov. 8 to celebrate the retiring of the debt on its education building. Pictured taking part in the ceremony are, left to right: Johnny Gibson, deacon; Don Harding, pastor; and Charles Arnold, deacon.

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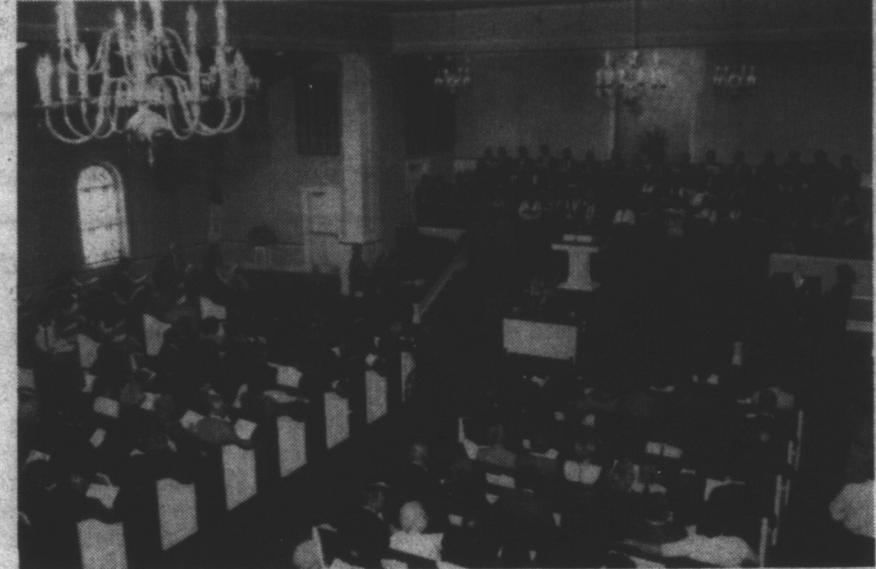
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AUBURN FIRST BAPTIST Church 1973-1993 College Choir Reunion. May 21-23, 1993. For more information contact: Dale Peterson, 128 East Glenn Ave., Auburn, AL 36830.

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LAST CALL: Eight days in Israel for \$999, Feb. 10-17, 1993. Experienced host, 15 tours abroad. Contact T.J. Wood, 758 Driftwood Dr., Meridian, MS 39305; (601) 681-6666.

POSITION OPEN: The Toledo Bend Baptist Ministries is now accepting resumes for the position of Resort Missionary to serve on the Louisiana side of the Toledo Bend Lake. Interested persons may send resumes to Bobby Dye, P.O. Box 1380, Many, LA 71449.



First Church of Coldwater recently built a new sanctuary that doubles its seating capacity to 500 at a cost of \$750,000. The new building was dedicated debt-free on the first Sunday of occupancy. Bob Maddux is pastor, Steve Andrews serves as minister of education/youth, and Tommy Lane is minister of music.



Agricola Church, Agricola, held a one day revival/ground breaking ceremony on Sept. 27. Sunday School had 218 present. The morning service was led by Eddie Davidson, former pastor. Agricola Church began a "Together We Build" campaign on July 5 with a vision to build a new sanctuary. Pictured, from left, are John Henry, director of missions, George/Greene Associations; Joe Howard, minister of music; Davidson; Mark Partin, TWB chairman, Rawleen Chisholm, building committee; Bruce Worrell, pastor; and L. R. Byrd, TWB campaign.

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FOCUS
40
BBC '93

Names in the News

NASHVILLE (BP) — Harold T. Bryson, chairman of pastoral ministries at New Orleans Seminary, will become a consultant for preaching/worship at the Baptist Sunday School Board Jan. 15. Bryson assumes the new role in the general leadership department in the church growth-Sunday School division. Bryson is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary with bachelor of divinity, master of theology, and doctor of theology degrees. A Mississippi native, he earned a bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College. Before joining the faculty of New Orleans Seminary, Bryson was pastor of several Mississippi churches.

YOUNGTOWN, Ariz. (BP) — Willis J. Ray, a pioneer in Southern Baptist work in the West, died Dec. 6 in Youngtown, Ariz. He was 96. Ray was executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Arizona (now Arizona Southern Baptist Convention) from 1944-56. In the early years, he also served as editor of the *Baptist Beacon*, newsmagazine of the state convention.

Jim Dickson has resigned as pastor of Lula Church, Lula. He is

available for supply, interim, or full time pastorate. His address is P. O. Box 275, Lula, MS 38644 or call 337-2354.

Myron C. Noonkester, associate professor of history at William Carey College, recently delivered a paper, "What Gardiner's History Was," at the regional meeting of the North American Conference on British Studies in Atlanta, Ga. He will also deliver a paper at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association in New Orleans in March, 1993.

William G. Dowdy Sr., pastor of Concord Church, Dry Creek, will retire on Dec. 31. He has served as pastor of several church including Cliff Temple, Natchez; White Oak, Smith Association; Gaston, Booneville; Mount Olive, Okolona; Furrs, Liberty, and Toccopola in Pontotoc Association. He and his wife, the former Fannie Garner, will reside at Ecru after retirement.



Dowdy

"We
Don't
Need
Just to
Think
About
Helping
The
Needy,
We
Need to
Help
The
Needy."



This concerned Baptist layman says this is *A Time to Remember* God's servants who are in need. In the Magnolia State, there are more than 380 retired pastors or their widows who receive annuities of less than \$200 per month. Some are in great need.

Taking time to remember the ministry of these faithful soldiers of the cross will inspire others to join in doing something to help.

Contact Harold Fisher, Executive Secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation (601) 968-3800, or C. Joe McIntosh, Vice President for Endowment at the Annuity Board.



Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention
P.O. Box 2190 • Dallas, Texas 75221-2190 • 1-800-262-0511

Thursday, December 17, 1992

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9

Just for the Record



Mantee Church in Webster Association held its GA/Acteen recognition service, entitled "Light Your World." GAs pictured, left to right, row 1, are Shanan Johnson, Emily Pinion, Kari Lawrence, Jennifer Clark; row 2, Danna Stone, Amber Forrester, Michelle Redwine, Jessica Pinion; row 3, Jill Roberson and Betty



Pinion, leaders. Acteens pictured, front row, are Emily Harrington, Leigh Stone, Hailey Stevens, Laura Stone; back row, Jada Neal, Paige Harrington, and Jennifer Brand. Not pictured are Pauline Neal and Ann Stone, leaders.



GAs and Acteens of Oak Grove Church, Meridian, held their recognition service Sept. 20. "Missions around the World" was presented by Mike and Ann Whitlock. Lindsey Speed, Lesley Carr, and Danielle McLemore received adventure two badges; Jaci Grant and Stacey Carr received adventure six badges. Acteen Shelly Carr with crown bearer Lauren Horne received her crown for completing Studi-Act Queen step. Amber Bounds, new Acteen member, was also present. Ann Whitlock is GA and Acteen director. GA leaders are Sandy Speed and Natalie Matlock. Leon Adams is pastor.



Arlington Church, Beaumont, recently held dedication for its new sanctuary. Pictured, right to left, are Troy Hillman, Lynn Lowe, David Roberts, Freddie Byrd, Mike Easterling, chairman of building, Clinton Gilleo, deceased, also served during the building program. Dean Stewart is pastor.

office at 582-6110 or 582-6192.

The choir of Terry Road Church, Jackson, will present "Angels of Christmas" under the direction of James Netherland on Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. Doris Lott is pianist. The church will also show the film, "Israel, God's Chosen Land," Dec. 27 at 7 p.m. Henry Bennett is pastor.

Country Woods Church, 6737 Siwell Road, Jackson, will have a live nativity scene from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Dec. 17 and 18.

Uniform God offers salvation



By Margaret Rogers
Luke 2:1-40

Jesus is the greatest individual in history and Luke placed him in the flow of world events. His forerunner, John the Baptist, had already been born. In many respects, Luke's stories of the birth of John and Jesus are parallel. However, the superiority of Jesus manifests itself early. When John was born, there was great joy but no worship. Jesus was acclaimed as "Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." The fullness of time had come when God would send forth his Son, the Messiah, who had been expected for hundreds of years.

Big news — the birth of hope (Luke 2:1-7). Jesus was born in the days of Augustus Caesar, when the Roman Empire extended itself farther than ever before or since. Judea had become a province of the empire, and the Jews were taxed as were all citizens. Judea was ruled by Cyrenius, the Roman governor of Syria, and he had issued a decree for all to be counted and taxed.

Since Joseph was a descendant of the royal line, he had to return to his ancestral home in Bethlehem. The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem must have been very tiring for the pregnant Mary. Providence so ordered this event in Bethlehem where the prophet Micah had prophesied hundreds of years before that the Messiah would be born. At Bethlehem Mary gave birth to her first-born child in a stable, and she laid him in a manger. These circumstances indicated the poverty of Mary and Joseph. The King of kings who was a ray of hope in a sin-darkened world was born with no conveniences and few necessities.

Jesus' presentation in the temple (vv. 22-32). At the circumcision ceremony, the Babe of Bethlehem was named Jesus. Of course, the name "Jesus" (Greek) is the same as "Joshua" (Hebrew) and means "Jehovah saves." Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day and Mary observed the purification rites in keeping with the Mosaic law. She went to the temple in Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice. Luke offers a reminder at this point that Jesus was born under Jewish law and that Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism. The offering of doves and pigeons indicates that Joseph and Mary were very poor. Those who could not afford a lamb were permitted to substitute a less costly offering.

When Simeon saw Jesus he recognized him as "the Lord's Christ" (Greek equivalent of Hebrew Messiah). The promise to Simeon that he would live to see "the consolation of Israel" was fulfilled in Jesus. Simeon was ready for death after he had seen God's promised salvation to all.

That Jesus would be rejected as well as accepted was anticipated in the words of Simeon. For Mary there would be a sword to pierce her heart, and although Mary knew her son was destined for a special work, she did not understand the implications of his work until Jesus' death. The fate of all people would depend on their acceptance or rejection of Jesus. The lordship of Jesus must be acknowledged by those who follow him, because he was God's gift to all people.

A missionary serving in Africa told his native students how Christians express their joy at receiving God's priceless gift by exchanging gifts to others on Christ's birthday. On Christmas morning, one of the natives brought the missionary an extraordinarily beautiful seashell. When asked where he had discovered such a lovely shell, the native said he had walked many miles to a remote beach, the only site where such shells could be found. The missionary thanked his pupil for traveling so far to obtain such a gorgeous gift. His eyes sparkling, the native answered, "Long walk part of gift." Valued gifts involve the giving of time, talents, and self to others.

Jesus' greatest gift to the world involved that long walk to Calvary after which he gave his life that all might have eternal life. This fact should encourage all to accept this marvelous gift of salvation and to express gratitude to God by glorifying him through daily living.

At this Christmas season, mindful of God's unspeakable gift to you, why not consider gifts of yourself to others: to your family, a Christian example; to enemies, sincere forgiveness; to friends, a Christlike relationship; and to all, second-mile service?

Rogers is a member of Salem Church, Collins.

Bible Book Birth of the Savior



By R. David Raddin
Luke 7:1-17, 20-21, 39-40

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come." What joy to know that just as surely as the Lord came that first Christmas, he comes to us today. He comes not only that we might know what death is about, but that we might know what life is about. "In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

The baby's birth (2:7). "And she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (2:7). Mary wrapped the baby in the traditional strips of cloth used by Jewish mothers. From the beginning, Jesus identified with ordinary people. The inn was probably not a large place, and very well could have been a single room in which several people stayed. Because there was no room for them, the baby was born and placed in a manger, a feeding trough.

The angel's announcement (2:8-14). "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good tidings of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord'" (vv. 8-11).

The announcement of the birth of the Savior came to common folks. The shepherds were considered by the Pharisees to be among the lowest of society. Jesus came for us all. Hear the announcement this Christmas: "A Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (v. 11).

The shepherds' responses (2:15-17, 20). "When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.... The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told" (vv. 15-17, 20).

The shepherds' first response was to go and see what had happened, which the Lord had told them about. They believed the word of the angel as a word from the Lord to them. God's Word to us is that the Savior has been born. He invites you and me to come and see Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

The shepherds responded by "glorifying and praising God" because they found the message from God through the angel to be true, "just as they had been told" (v. 20). We can glorify and praise God because his Word that Jesus came for us is true, just as we have been told. What is your response to the Lord?

The baby's circumcision and naming (2:21). "On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived" (v. 21). "Jesus" means "Yahweh Saves." He is the Savior. Salvation is through him to all who believe in him as Savior and Lord.

The child's growth in a devout family (2:39-40). "When Mary and Joseph had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (vv. 39-40).

The home of Mary and Joseph was given to the ways of the Lord. May we live in their example that our homes be committed to God. May our children see in us parents who know Jesus, the Savior.

Let us rejoice as we celebrate the birth of the Savior. Joy to the world! The Lord is come!

Raddin is pastor, First Church, Yazoo City.

Life and Work Providing the Savior



By Milton Burd
Luke 2:6-17

There are many stories that have become tradition among children and their families at Christmas time, but the greatest of all Christmas stories is found in Luke 2. This passage records the beginning of the greatest story of all: the story of God coming to dwell with us (Emmanuel). God provided a Savior for all people. "The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out" (John 1:4-5). God had spoken in many ways, but in Luke 2, he spoke to us in a little child born in a manger.

The birth in Bethlehem (vv. 6-7). All of us like surprises at Christmas. God provided a surprise for the world when Jesus was born. There were many preconceived ideas in Jewish thought about the Messiah, and a baby was certainly not one of them.

But God in his wisdom sent Jesus as our Redeemer and Savior, born in a manger in Bethlehem, in very modest surroundings. There was no room in the inn for Joseph and Mary. They needed a place to escape the cold night air, so they accepted the innkeeper's offer to lodge in the stable. This was the setting for Mary to give birth to her first-born son. She wrapped him in clothes (brought with her from Nazareth) and placed him in a manger, a feeding trough for animals that served as a cradle for the newborn Savior. The humble birthplace of a stable was God's affirmation that he was sending a Savior for everyone.

The angel's announcement to the shepherds (vv. 8-12). The announcement of the birth was made to shepherds, not to kings or priests. Shepherds were lowly, humble people. They were important only to their flocks. Such were the people for whom Jesus came. He was a friend of sinners, the sick, and the poor. "He came to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

The shepherds were frightened at the sudden appearance of an angel. They perhaps huddled together in fear of this angel with all of God's glory. The angel's first task was to reassure the shepherds that they were safe ("fear not"). The angel was there to announce a very special event. This announcement was a cause for great joy. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!" The good news was to be to all people. Jews, Gentiles, young, old, rich, poor, red, yellow, black, and white!

The angel informed the shepherds on that day, a Savior, Christ the Lord, was born in Bethlehem. This Savior was God's Messiah promised by God to Israel. The angel also told the shepherds how to recognize the newborn Savior and confirm the angel's message: they would find a baby wrapped in clothes, lying in a manger.

The angels rejoice (vv. 13-14). Another amazing event occurred in the presence of the shepherds. After the announcement of the birth by the angel, there was a sudden appearance of a great company of the heavenly host. Verse 13 describes a magnificent service of praise and worship. Verse 14 gives the message, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." The only true, lasting peace is the peace to be found in Jesus Christ.

The shepherds' response (vv. 15-17). When the worship of the heavenly host had ended, the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem to see what had happened. They found Joseph and Mary and the baby, lying in the manger, just as the angel had said. Their willingness to obey the Lord's instructions made them the first persons to see the Savior. Luke does not tell us what happened during the visit or how long they stayed, but they must have been impressed to be in the presence of God's Son. They left the stable and spread the word about this special news of Christ the Lord. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said.

The Christmas season is a wonderful time for us to tell the good news of Jesus Christ. We can share our own personal experience of salvation with family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers. We can give generously to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to support missionaries in reaching others. Celebrate this Christmas with family and friends, pause for a few minutes to read Luke 2, and reflect on that first Christmas, Merry Christmas to the Mississippi Baptist family.

Burd is minister of education, First Church, Cleveland.

THE VILLAGE VIEW

The Baptist Children's Village

Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

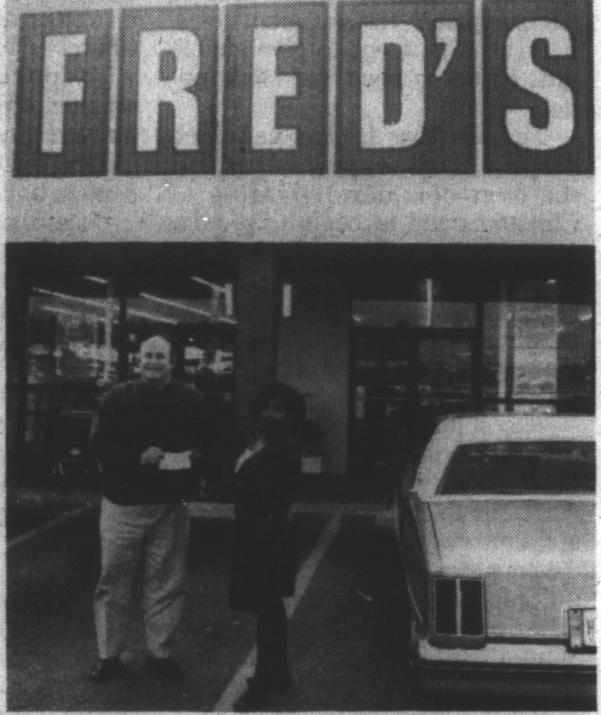


P. O. Box 27,
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242



Fred's makes donation to Children's Village

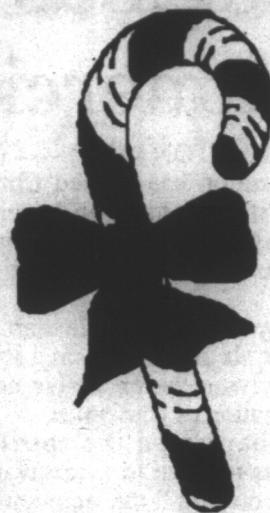
Fred's Discount Store in Clinton recently donated \$300 to The Baptist Children's Village. The donation was from the proceeds raised at the Fred's, Inc. Benefit Golf Tournament in Memphis, Tenn., headquarters for Fred's Discount Stores. Charitable organizations throughout the Mid-South, where Fred's operates over 190 stores, were selected to receive the donations. Pictured are Fred's Store manager, Lunnie Patrick, and Ronny E. Robinson, Village Executive Director.



Mrs. Liz Burnside (left) and Mr. Elton Hardy (right) were recognized at a recent retirement reception. Rev. Ronny Robinson, Executive Director (center), presented each with a small gift from the Village Staff. Mrs. Burnside served as Child Care Worker for three years. Mr. Hardy served as Child Care Worker and Manager of our Central Supply Department for almost 15 years.



The CHOICE (Choosing Higher Objectives in Challenging Experiences) Element demonstrated in this picture is the SPIDERS WEB. The Goal is for the group to pass safely through the web without waking the spider (touching the web). Once a hole is passed through, it closes. This initiative is often times very challenging. Frustration is often tested. Honesty and ability to learn from mistakes are big issues. The facilitator should watch for lack of willingness to change the plan of attack. Body size and image usually come into play on this initiative. We learn who accepts/rejects physical support from the group.



CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

CHRISTMAS — I do not know of another word that elicits such joy in the hearts and lives of both the young and old. Each Christmas seems to have a special memory that sets it apart from any other Christmas. These memories include special acts of kindness and special people who have touched our lives. Each Christmas at the Village always produces memories that last throughout the lives of our children. I want to thank you for helping to make so many of those wonderful memories.

As you gather with your family at this season, your conversation will surely turn to the many wonderful blessings that have been yours in this past year. Many of you will personally express thankfulness for a Christian

home and Godly parents who sacrificed to care for you. When your thoughts turn to home, please remember **ALL** of your children. You are a vital part of Mississippi's Largest Family, The Baptist Children's Village. You can help make this Christmas one that your children will never forget. Any gift will show your love and compassion.

I wish for you and yours only God's richest blessings at this wonderful time of the year.

I am humbly,

RONNY E. ROBINSON
Executive Director

Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

**Nov. 1, 1992 -
Nov. 30, 1992**

HONORS

Ruby Adams
TEL. SS FBC Charleston
Mrs. Louise Anderson
Tuesday Afternoon Baptist Women, FBC Gulfport
Mr. & Mrs. D. T. Bailey, Jr.
Mr. Charles W. Holmes
Mrs. Ruby Bender
Mrs. W. E. Owen
Mrs. Frances Bradley
Mrs. Myrtle Long Adams
Margaret L. D. Dotson
Mr. & Mrs. George Chadwick Extended Session Workers
FBC Tupelo
The Ruth Class FBC Tupelo
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Grisham
Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Bevill
Mr. & Mrs. Toby Hendrix
Mrs. Dorothy Mangold
Billy Mangold
Billy & Vonda Maynard
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Dodd Jr.
Mrs. Ora Mae McAlpin
The Ruth Bible Class FBC, Magee
Mrs. Ruth C. Newsom
Miss Emma M. Moore
Angela Parrish
Mr. & Mrs. Brewer Hamilton
Dr. Jim Phillips and Family
Dr. & Mrs. B. A. Sims
Brandon and Daniel Thocker
Mr. & Mrs. Brewer Hamilton
Rev. and Mrs. Bobby Walton
Mr. & Mrs. James L. Hall
Mr. James P. Warwick
Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Warwick
Mrs. J. M. Wells
Mr. & Mrs. B. R. Taylor

MEMORIALS

Mrs. Jimmie Adair
Mr. & Mrs. Myrl McCormick
Louise Akins
Mr. & Mrs. Garvin Knight
Mr. Jerry Douglas Aldridge
Mr. & Mrs. Truman Aldridge
Mr. L. A. Alford
Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Kelly
Mr. Earl Allen
Mr. & Mrs. W. K. Riggan
Mr. Jessie R. Allen
Mrs. R. C. Johnson

Deborah Ann Anderson
Mr. & Mrs. Walter J. McDill
Mr. E. H. Anderson
Mrs. Fannie Ashford
Mack Arnold
Mr. & Mrs. Leland O. Moak Sr.
Loren O. and Henry A. Ashby
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Allen
Mrs. Maggie Austin
Mrs. Maude Orr
Ms. Wade Aycock
Mrs. Joyce C. Aycock
Mr. Fred Bagley
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Vandevender
E. L. (June) and Theo Bennett
Mr. & Mrs. D. S. Bowering
Mr. & Mrs. John Corder
Aubrey Frank Ballard
Mr. & Mrs. John T. Erwin
Rev. Taylor Ballard
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Rice
Jimmy Bandy
Mr. & Mrs. William M. Crowe
Juanita R. Banks
Graeber Brothers Inc.
Mr. Jonas Barish
Mr. William H. Myrick
Sister of Mrs. Teresa Barnes
Mr. & Mrs. R. H. Millis
Bill Barnett
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Gillon
William J. Barrette
Adult Couples SS, Bethany BC
J. Dexter Barr, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Kelly
Mrs. S. H. Barret
Mrs. Sidney B. Thornton
Mrs. Susan Bridges Barret
Mr. & Mrs. David M. Ferriss
Dr. & Mrs. T. Scott McCay
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Stanford
Mr. & Mrs. Joe E. Beckham & Family
Mr. & Mrs. S. R. Pinson
Mr. & Mrs. S. W. Gardner
Mr. Neil Doby Bartling
Dr. & Mrs. Raymond S. Martin Jr.
Mr. Johnnie A. Baughn
Lexington Postal Employees
Mr. & Mrs. A. J. Davis
Mr. & Mrs. Clarence B. Minyard
Mr. & Mrs. J. M. Tidwell
Mr. & Mrs. Norman Weatherby Sr.
Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Ellison, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Powers
Mr. & Mrs. Hayes Grantham
Mrs. Lucy Bowie
Mrs. H. L. Thompson
Mrs. Laura Beach
Mr. & Mrs. Delma L. Caldwell
Mrs. Dorothy W. Shaw and Family
Mrs. Max (Inez Rea) Bell
Ann Bankston

Mr. Allen Matthews and Daughters
Marilyn Sullivan
The Rayburn Breazeale Family
The George Kish Family
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Petty
Mr. & Mrs. Ray W. Penn
Daisy Beasley
Mr. & Mrs. C. E. Ray
Norma Elizabeth Beck
Mr. & Mrs. James M. Pentecost
Coleman Bennett
Noxapater Masonic Lodge
Grace Bennett
Mrs. Janet Dickinson
Christopher Eugene Blake
David, Noni and Rex Croft
Mrs. H. A. Noblin
Clarice Mackey Booker Booker
Mrs. Ann O'Hare
Mr. Ward Boshers
Mrs. T. L. Johnson
Herbert S. Boyette
Marilyn Muselwhite
Mr. & Mrs. John O. Watkins
Mrs. Louise Bradshaw
Senior Adult SS,
Alexander Memorial BC
Mrs. Bertha Breedlove
Mr. Gregory T. Jackson
Mrs. Verna Claire Brewer
Mr. & Mrs. George H. Lipe
Mrs. Dallas Bright
Mr. & Mrs. Fred D. Evans Jr.
Mrs. Sally Brister
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Hand
Allison Britt
Mr. & Mrs. Truman Moore
Joy Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. Leandon E. Brown
Mr. J. Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. Truitt Phillips
Steven H. Browning
Graeber Brothers Inc.
Dr. Neal Buckley
Mr. & Mrs. David Lee Valentine
West, Adams, Webb & Allbritton P.C.
Carl Butler
Mrs. Virginia McCraw
Luther Butler
Mr. & Mrs. William R. Minter
Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Butler
Mr. & Mrs. William R. Minter
Mrs. Ida Byrd
Miss Beatrice Brownlee
Mr. John E. Campbell
Mr. James W. Kitchens
Mr. Albert Case
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry McDaniel
Mrs. Jerry Chambers
Mr. & Mrs. Charles F. Stanford Jr.
Mrs. Nell Champion
Men's Friendship Bible Class,

(to be continued)

capsules

CLC ASKS CLINTON NOT TO APPOINT A U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE VATICAN: NASHVILLE (BP) — Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land has asked President-elect Bill Clinton to "redress" a "wrong" committed by former President Ronald Reagan when he appointed an ambassador to the Vatican. "Our conviction concerning the propriety of this policy has not wavered," Land said in his letter. "The Holy See of the Roman Catholic Church is an ecclesiastical entity, not a civil state. While it is entirely appropriate for the government to have communication and interaction with a religious organization, appointing an ambassador goes too far. It virtually tears down the wall of separation between the government and this particular denomination, while discriminating against other religious entities which do not receive the same diplomatic benefits. We would oppose diplomatic status for any religious entity," Land said.

MIAMI PASTOR HELPS RUSSIANS PUT CHRISTMAS TREE IN RED SQUARE: MIAMI (ABP) — A 60-foot Christmas tree will adorn Moscow's Red Square this year, signaling the start of a new tradition in Russia, which has not observed Christmas as a national holiday for 73 years. The project, which was approved recently by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, is primarily the work of Baptist pastor Tommy Watson of Miami. Yeltsin is expected to speak during the tree-lighting ceremony in late December, and his wife will proclaim the Christmas tree a new tradition for the orphaned children of Moscow. "Since 1917, Russia has marched its armies and paraded its war machinery through Red Square to demonstrate its military might while millions have come out to view it," said Watson, pastor of First Church of Perrine in Miami. "I predict that more people will come to see this tree than ever viewed their war machine."

BAPTIST HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE KILLED IN APPARENT ROBBERY: ATLANTA (BP) — Jenny Rogers, an employee of Georgia Baptist Medical Center and daughter of Georgia Baptist Convention staff member Dennis Rogers, died the evening of Dec. 6 after being shot in an apparent robbery. Rogers, who would have turned 20 on Christmas Day, was a nursing student working as a patient care assistant at Georgia Baptist Medical Center. According to news reports, she had completed her shift at 11 p.m. Dec. 6 and told co-workers she planned to visit a friend in nearby Clarkston and possibly stop at a restaurant before going to her home in Lilburn.

SOUTHEASTERN REMAINS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION: WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, while recognizing Southeastern Seminary's rapid progress, has decided the seminary will remain on probation for one more year in order to observe the completion of one entire cycle of the self-assessment and long-range planning processes which have been set in place by the seminary. President Paige Patterson indicated his "profound disappointment" in the decision but said he was not surprised. "I regret the necessity of the additional year of probation because of the monumental efforts and sacrifices of the entire seminary family to realize this goal as quickly as possible," said Patterson. "But I am encouraged by the Association's recognition of our significant progress and their offer of further assistance."

ROSENBAUM TO DIRECT OPERATIONS FOR BSSB TRADE PUBLISHING DIVISION: NASHVILLE (BP) — Richard P. "Bucky" Rosenbaum, vice president for business and finance at the Executive Committee, has resigned to become the director of operations for the Sunday School Board's trade publishing division. Rosenbaum, 38, and a former board employee, will assume the newly created position Jan. 1. He will oversee purchasing and business functions for the board's trade publishing operations which include Broadman Press, Holman Bible Publishers, Church Information System computer hardware, and software and other imprints. Rosenbaum was employed by the board 11 years before joining the Executive Committee in December 1990.

CLINTON'S TV GUIDE REMARKS MAY SPARK HOLLYWOOD CHALLENGE: LOS ANGELES (BP) — President-elect Bill Clinton surprised Hollywood evangelicals when he told *TV Guide* recently he is "mortified" by some of what he sees on television. He called on Hollywood to take the lead in "deglamourizing mindless sex and violence." He suggested "TV and movie makers could, without undermining their artistic integrity, have a major new impact on the way people view the world." Tom Lester, a native of Laurel, Miss., who starred for six years as "Eb" on television's "Green Acres," said he was "glad to hear Gov. Clinton saying what he said." Jess Moody, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church (a Southern Baptist church) in Chatsworth, Calif., harbors little optimism studio executives are willing to discuss changing the values their media express: "Many of them are making bold and rather arrogant statements: 'We don't care what the church thinks. We're going to do what we think is right, and the First Amendment gives us that right.' They confuse liberty with license."

Religious leaders decry excessive commercialization of Christmas

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Commercialization has robbed Christmas of its meaning and turned shopping malls into "the new shrines of worship" in American culture.

So say 25 religious leaders — including six Baptists — in a statement decrying the excessive commercialization of Christmas.

"We have seen the spirit of Christmas reduced to a carnival of mass marketing," the ecumenical group says. "Consumption has taken on an almost religious quality; malls have become the new shrines of worship."

The religious leaders urge Americans to distinguish between Christmas giving that captures the true meaning of the season and "obsessive spending as a way to fill the spiritual vacuum left by an over-consumptive society."

"In the end," the statement warns, "the delirium of commercial Christmas devours some, leaves others in ruinous debt, and punishes the poor, for whom the joy of Christmas always seems a dollar away."

"Christmas giving, in all its forms, is enriched when spiritual and ethical values overshadow the almost chronic compulsions to

buy," the statement continues. "The advertising lords of Madison Avenue have been successful in developing among many a coerced sense of guilt that drives consumer anxiety (and buying) at Christmas time."

Personal, altruistic, and reflective giving is part of what makes Christmas real, the statement notes. It urges Americans to give simple gifts based on need, not consumption.

The religious leaders call upon people of faith to speak out against the over-commercialization of Christmas and to begin to reorder priorities.

"Christmas was never intended to be a crass marketing ploy. Let us restore the spiritual and life-affirming potential of the season — and take it into the new year."

The statement, coordinated by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for the Study of Commercialism, was sent to hundreds of regional and church organizations around the country.

Baptist signers include: Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala.; Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville,

Tenn.; George Reed, director of the council on Christian Life and Public Affairs for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; Stan Haste, executive director of the Alliance of Baptists in Washington, D.C.; Daniel Weiss, general secretary of the American Baptist Churches; and Calvin Butts, minister at Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York.

A spokesman for America's retailers objected to the statement, however, noting the country's 19 million retail employees are dependent on holiday sales.

"Cancel Christmas? You would throw the country into depression," Jack Schultz, president of the National Retail Federation in New York, told the *Charlotte Observer*. "I don't want to take on the religious community, but an awful lot of jobs depend on Christmas.... If you think that's sacrilegious, the country's in trouble."

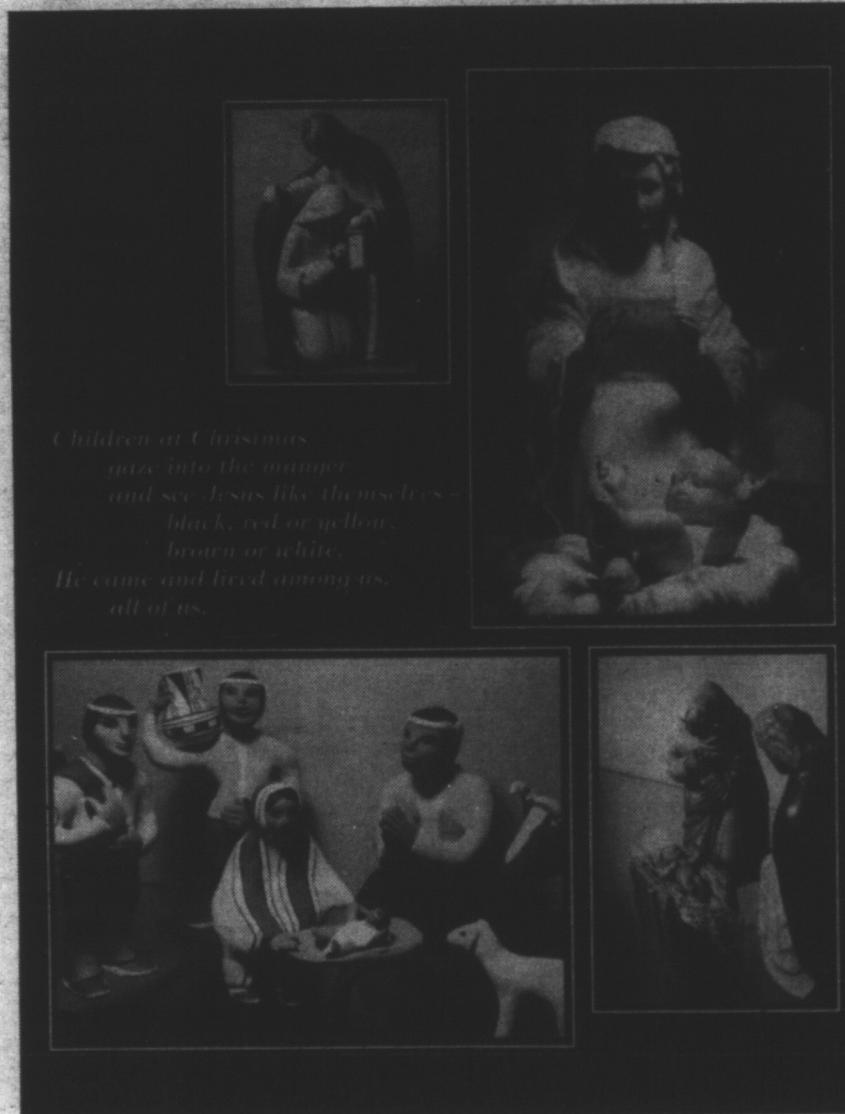
Parham said the religious leaders' statement goes beyond similar ones which focused on the materialistic behavior of individuals and instead identifies commercialism as the driving force which aggravates our inherent materialism and consumerism."

"The commercialism of Christmas plays on the shadow side (of human nature)," Parham said, "attempting to replace the eternal and transcendent values of the Peace Child with the temporary and illusionary values of material consumption."

Parham said Christians must resist the idea that "to be happy is to buy things." He told the *Tennessean* of Nashville that he and his wife, Betsy, talk to their children throughout the year about the TV advertising they see.

"We ask, 'Why do they want you to buy that product — because it will make you happy or because they want your money?'"

This story includes information from Pam Parry of the Baptist Joint Committee, Ken Garfield of the *CHARLOTTE OBSERVER*, and Ray Waddle of the *Nashville TENNESSEAN*.



Christmas around the world

NASHVILLE — Christians around the world view the Christmas story through the eyes of their own cultures, as illustrated by these four nativity scenes. Housed at the Upper Room, a chapel and museum operated by the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn., they are (clockwise): "The Holy Family," by Goebel, West Germany; a nativity scene from the Boehm collection, made in the United States; "Presepio," made in northeastern Brazil; and a Native American Indian nativity by Rachel Aragon. (Photo by Jim Veneman)

Baptist Record

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